

Hackney City Farm

1a Goldsmith Row, Hackney, London, Middlesex E2 8QA

Inspection dates

13–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have addressed all the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. All aspects of the school's work are now good.
- Governors support the headteacher well. They have increased leadership capacity for improvement by commissioning additional external support to train and develop leaders and teachers. Consequently, the school is now good and improving.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is compliant with all the independent school standards.
- Pupils who join this alternative provision have typically been excluded from their schools because of poor behaviour. They feel disengaged and have low self-esteem. All members of staff care for and help pupils to improve their behaviour, grow in self-confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils settle down, engage positively in learning and leave the school ready for further education, employment or training.
- Rates of attendance are increasing. Typically, pupils attend this alternative provision more often than in their former schools.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils are safe and that they learn to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the many and varied enrichment activities and workshops on offer. These opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and prepare them well for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Pupils typically join this school with very low standards and at different points during the year. Based on the assessment of their prior knowledge and understanding, teachers plan lessons to meet their needs. As a result, pupils make good progress overall during their time at the school.
- Pupils do not consistently complete the work set by their teachers, especially when they miss a lesson. This leaves some gaps in their learning and slows their progress.
- Too often, pupils arrive late to school. They therefore miss valuable learning time at the start of the day. This limits them from reaching their full potential.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by making sure that pupils catch up and complete any work that they miss.
- Continue your work to improve pupils' punctuality to school so that they do not miss valuable teaching and learning at the start of the day.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, proprietor and governors have created a culture of care in the school. They dedicate themselves to helping disaffected and vulnerable pupils re-engage so that they are well placed to make a success of their future lives. As one teacher put it, 'pupils at the school, as a direct result of the ethos, are prepared and engaged in a way unthinkable to them before they arrived.'
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced robust systems for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Leaders make sure that teachers benefit from training and feedback to improve their effectiveness. They now hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. As a result, teaching is good and improving, and pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher, supported by external agencies, has successfully increased the rates of pupils' attendance. From the start of the current academic year to date, rates of overall attendance have increased by 15 percentage points compared to the same period in the previous two years. The increased attendance is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The curriculum offer is suited to the needs of the pupils. All pupils continue to study functional skills in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, and biology. Leaders are beginning to enter some pupils for GCSE English. Some pupils spend time on the farm learning skills of animal husbandry.
- Since the start of this year, leaders take pupils on weekly educational visits. These enrichment activities give pupils new experiences and opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding across many areas of learning. They visit a range of museums and art galleries, for example. Recently, for instance, they walked through a tunnel under the Thames that was built two centuries ago, and then crossed back on the cable car. This led to discussions and understanding of how technology and engineering have developed over time.
- Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education. This course is effective in helping pupils to appreciate and respect difference, including learning about people with protected characteristics. It supports pupils in understanding finance, building positive relationships and how to stay safe. These programmes, and the enrichment activities, are effective in preparing pupils well for their future lives in modern Britain.

Governance

- Governors demonstrate effective strategic leadership. Following the weaknesses identified in the previous standard inspection, they worked with the local authority in commissioning additional leadership support. This helped governors to improve their own effectiveness and school leaders to improve teaching, pupils' outcomes and attendance.
- Governors regularly visit the school. They recently joined pupils in a science workshop on renewable energies, for example.

- Through reports from the headteacher and a consultant, as well as through their own visits, governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They support and challenge school leaders to improve.
- Governors make sure that the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leaders and all members of staff undertake safeguarding training. There is a strong culture of vigilance. Members of staff are aware that pupils at the school are potentially vulnerable to a number of safeguarding issues. They know how to identify signs that raise concerns.
- In this small school, all members of staff know the pupils well. The headteacher meets with the staff at the end of each day. They discuss all the pupils and share any concerns that might have arisen that day. This helps to make sure that pupils are safe.
- Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to support pupils' welfare and to make sure that they are safe.
- Leaders invite parents to safeguarding workshops. Recent workshops have included topics such as understanding internet safety and updates on gangs in the local area.
- Pupils benefit from many classes that help them to understand how to keep safe. They have had sessions to help them understand when others might be grooming them for sex, drugs, gangs or radicalisation and extremism, for instance.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. The policy has proper regard to current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good. It helps pupils to learn well and make good progress from their very low starting points.
- Teachers use the information from initial assessments of pupils' standards and regular testing to prepare lessons that meet their needs. In recent English tests, for instance, teachers identified that a small number of pupils who are more able have made enough progress to start the GCSE syllabus. As a result of tailoring work to their needs, teaching enables pupils to make good progress.
- Most teaching is one-to-one. Teachers have sound subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to work hard and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Teachers quickly identify misconceptions and help pupils to gain a better understanding of the work. They use questioning effectively to help pupils deepen their understanding. As they become more successful, pupils gain in confidence and work with sustained concentration. Increasingly, therefore, as they settle into school life, they become successful learners.

- Occasionally, pupils do not manage to complete the work in class that teachers set them. Evidence in books shows that when a pupil is absent, they sometimes do not catch up the work that they missed. This leaves gaps in their learning and slows their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school helps disaffected and vulnerable young people to re-engage in education, improve their behaviours and learn how to become successful and responsible citizens.
- Leaders work closely with pupils and agencies to help pupils overcome their difficulties and ensure their welfare. Through the curriculum and work with other providers, leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to develop their physical health and mental wellbeing.
- The school provides pupils with effective pastoral care. Pupils say that they learn to trust the adults in the school and know that they can approach them for help. They express appreciation for the opportunities to start learning again, feeling that they can engage far better in this small environment. They also enjoy the opportunities to visit and work on the adjacent farm. They find this calming and therapeutic. As a result of the school's approach, pupils start to believe in themselves and aspire to a better future.
- In a recent project, pupils worked with an external company to film and learn about the local community. This gave them new insights into parts of the community of which they were not previously aware. A small number of pupils occasionally contribute to the community, such as by litter-picking in the park.
- Each day, pupils and teachers read newspaper articles and discuss the latest news. Adults encourage pupils to express their views and debate respectfully with each other. This is effective in developing pupils' knowledge of current affairs and their thinking and debating skills.
- Pupils meet regularly with a specialist careers advisor to discuss their options and long-term career aspirations and pathways. This helps pupils to plan for successful careers once they leave the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders and members of staff make their expectations for good behaviour clear to pupils when they join the school. It takes some pupils a little while to settle down and meet those expectations. With patience and perseverance, adults help these pupils to understand why and how they need to change their behaviours, and, in time, they too settle down.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils and adults eat lunch together and pupils use the time well for socialising.

- Almost all pupils had poor attendance at their previous schools. Pupils markedly improve their attendance at this school. Overall attendance rates have risen considerably since the time of the previous inspection.
- Too often pupils arrive late to school. This has a detrimental impact on their learning and slows their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join this school with standards well below those expected for their age, including in English and mathematics. This is because they were disengaged with education and, often, their attendance was poor at their previous schools. As a result, they made little progress before joining this school.
- Pupils make good progress during their time at this school. This includes the most-able and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Pupils settle down to work because of the strong pastoral support and good teaching that meets their needs. They want to attain the qualifications they need to carry on to the next stage of their careers.
- Last year's pupils made good progress in their learning. Year 11 pupils went on to post-16 education, undertaking vocational courses such as in heating engineering, hair and beauty, and performing arts.
- Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that current pupils are making good progress in their academic studies. This, combined with the school's strong emphasis on pupils' personal development, is helping them prepare well for further education, employment or training.
- Some pupils are not making the substantial progress of which they are capable. This is because they do not consistently complete all of their work and do not arrive punctually to school.

School details

Unique reference number	141737
DfE registration number	204/6011
Inspection number	10041404

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Hackney City Farm Limited
Chair	David Brook
Headteacher	Adrian Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£16,200
Telephone number	020 7729 6381
Website	http://hackneycityfarm.co.uk
Email address	school@hackneycityfarm.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–28 January 2016

Information about this school

- The Hackney City Farm School operates as an alternative education provider for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school opened in 2005 within a farm that is open to the public. It gained registration as an independent school in 2015.
- This was the school's second standard inspection. It was judged to be inadequate at the time of its first standard inspection as a number of the independent school standards were unmet. The school had an unannounced monitoring inspection in October 2016,

when it was judged that the school met the previously unmet independent school standards.

- The school is registered to admit up to 10 pupils aged from 13 to 17. None of the pupils currently on roll are in the sixth form. Three of the pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are referred to the school by New Regent's College in Hackney, the local authority pupil referral unit, which commissions alternative provision for key stage 4 pupils. Most of them continue to be jointly registered with the school which they originally attended.
- The proprietor is the chair of trustees of Hackney City Farm Limited There is a board of three governors, which includes the farm manager.
- Since July 2016, the proprietor and governors appointed an education lead to support leaders in securing further improvements to the school.
- The school's aims are to 'engage, nurture, care and prepare pupils for their future lives'.
- The school does not use any other alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in eight parts of lessons.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work.
- The inspector met with staff, pupils and leaders. The inspector spoke by telephone with the chair of trustees. He met with three governors, the deputy headteacher of New Regent's College and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils during social times.
- Documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work were checked for compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector could not take account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) as there were no responses. He considered the five responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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